



## William F. (Buzz) Sawyer III 1996

### WILLIAM F. (BUZZ) SAWYER, III

My addiction to this dance started when I was 12 years old. We'd go swimming on Saturday afternoons at Happy's Lake between China Grove and Rockwell, NC. "CC Rider", "Ivory Tower" and other records were bouncing across the lake. When "Drip Drop" came on, people were getting out of the water to go watch somebody dance. I went to "investigate". It was better than anything I'd ever seen on the "box" with the picture! The dancer was Mike Osborne. That was it! That school year I was the first one at the sock hops and the last to leave.

I moved to Spartanburg, SC in 1958 entering the 10th grade. That summer we danced at Curry's Lake in Gray Court. This is where I met Wanda Holiday, Dianne Moore, Billy Waldrep, Mike Kellet and Danny Lanford - what fun we had!

The next summer I was Myrtle Beach bound to watch people dance at the pavilion. I saw this guy that reminded me of a "scarecrow" but he had 5 or 6 beautiful girls surrounding him! I thought, what in the world does this guy have? My question was answered as soon as he hit the dance floor! It was JoJo Putnam. I sat on that bench, watched went home for the next school year and practiced. The next summer I returned to that same bench and waited for the right song - got up, started dancing and watched everybody else sit down. What a thrill! There was a summer job at Belk's where I met Rufus "Stutter Step" Wactor. We would make trips to Winthrop College to dance.

The following summer I worked at Carolina Beach at Britt's DoNut Shop and Forty Seven Seaside Restaurant. On weekends I would go to OD to the Pad to dance - that was heaven! I picked up my nickname "Buzz" from Little Jimmy Smith, Dickie and Jackie Fleming.

The next year I went to Wingate Junior College. We'd go to Rock Hill and dance at The Fiesta. I would thumb with Eddie Yount, from Hickory, to Marsfield Amvets Club on Thursday night. That's where I really met Mike Osborne and Shad Alberty - two top dogs! I remember staying up all night with Mike, Shad, Brenda and 2 of her girlfriends dancing to Sonny Turner's "Symphony". I went to summer school at Wingate, after all it was closer to OD. This year I met Sandra Harton Swartz, who I consider to be the best female dancer along with Tommy "Drop Spin" White - best I'd ever seen spinning. When "Spider" Kirkman, Shad, Tommy and Mike were on the beach the same weekend, you did a lot of watching. The only time I'd dance was to try something of theirs to add to my repertoire, but they told me to make it my own style.

I moved to Charlotte and the only place to go was the Hi-Fi Country Club - Sunday nights we'd dance to Diana Ross, Curtis Mayfield and The Impressions and The Four Tops to mention a few. Finally, The Royal Box opened, the only good place to dance 7 days a week thanks to Don Reid. Then came B&G Trading Post, Pour House, Cellar, Papa Doc's, Midnight Sun, Treehouse, Nicky's, Johnny Dollars and Groucho's.

The summer of '64 I'd show up at Turks with Mike Osborne - super year! The "Tour" - Myrtle Beach Pavilion 2-5; OD Pavilion 6-8; The Pad 8-9:45; Sonny's Pavilion 11:45; The Forks (with a running tab) until . . . ran this circuit until the fall of '67. The "Big Call" came from my Uncle saying, "Congratulations, you're U.S. Army bound".

I returned from Nam and went to USC with Richard Abney. I got married - had a son, Tom. I moved to Birmingham for 3 years and back to Charlotte in 1979. Our dance was being revived and disco was fading, thank goodness! I then moved to Atlanta for 9 years. Traveling through Greenville, SC July 10 of 1988, I met my wife, Dana, on the second step of the Sand Flea. This goes to prove what you might find starting with a hand towel tied to a door knob . . .